

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16), Chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry, issued the following statement after the House Agriculture Committee approved the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management (FARRM) Act:

“Our farm bill is good for Florida’s farmers and ranchers, and it’s good for Florida taxpayers. We’ve made much-needed reforms to ensure that our farmers can continue to provide a safe and abundant food supply, and we’ve provided them with relief from unnecessary federal mandates.

“The bill saves taxpayers more than \$35 billion, and it reduces the size of government by eliminating or consolidating more than 100 programs. This legislation includes common sense reforms to the food stamp program to prevent abuse and ensure that benefits go to the truly needy.”

Rooney highlighted several sections of the bill that will benefit Florida’s farmers, including:

- Replacing outdated, ineffective subsidy programs with a new, voluntary risk management safety net for dairy producers in Okeechobee and across the state of Florida;
- Increasing funding for the Specialty Crop Block Program, which has successfully enhanced the competitiveness of specialty crops – like citrus, strawberries and tomatoes – through grants to states to support research, product quality enhancement, food safety and other projects;
- Combating plant pests and diseases like citrus greening by streamlining programs and increasing funding for early detection and response to plant pest or disease, which saves taxpayer dollars while minimizing potential damages;
- Requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to complete a workload assessment when considering whether to close a Farm Service Agency office, which would help prevent the misguided closure of offices like the Highlands County FSA; and,
- Continuing to protect Florida’s livestock producers from unwarranted federal regulation and intrusion.

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